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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

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THESIS

**EFFECTS OF UAVS ON INTERSTATE
RELATIONSHIPS: A CASE STUDY OF U.S. RELATIONS
WITH PAKISTAN AND YEMEN**

by

David S. Pagan

June 2015

Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader:

Daniel J. Moran
Victoria Clement

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**EFFECTS OF UAVS ON INTERSTATE RELATIONSHIPS: A CASE STUDY OF
U.S. RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN AND YEMEN**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(MIDDLE EAST, SOUTH ASIA, SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA)**

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ABSTRACT

In the wake of the attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States of America embarked upon a major counter-terrorism campaign against al Qaeda and its affiliates. The conflict has involved ground combat operations in Afghanistan, as well as ancillary actions in Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia. In all of these theaters, the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) has increased dramatically; in recent years, armed UAVs have been used to conduct strikes in Yemen and Pakistan.

The rapid growth of UAV operations shows no sign of slowing, and the implications of their use need to be continually examined if the United States wishes to achieve its policy objectives in Pakistan and Yemen. Comparing these cases will help bring together knowledge gained in studying each case separately. This thesis investigates how the use of UAVs as part of the counter-terrorism campaigns in Yemen and Pakistan has affected U.S. relations with those countries and whether the current arrangements are the best policies to combat terrorism in these countries.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

9/11	September 11, 2001 (and the attacks on that date)
AQAP	Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
AUMF	Authorization for Use of Military Force of 2001
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (U.S.)
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CT	Counterterrorism
DoD	Department of Defense
DoJ	Department of Justice (U.S.)
DPRY	Peoples Democratic Republic of Yemen
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Pakistan)
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	Government Accountability Office (U.S.)
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GWOT	Global War on Terror
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
ISI	Inter Services Intelligence Directorate (Pakistan)
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
NSA	National Security Agency (U.S.)
NWFP	Northwest Frontier Province (Pakistan)
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
PSO	Political Security Office (Yemen)
TTP	Pakistani Taliban
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (Drone)
UNSC	UN Security Council
UN	United Nations
U.S.	United States of America
U.S.S.R.	Soviet Union (Russia)
WWII	World War II

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. RISE OF THE UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE

In the wake of the attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States of America embarked upon a major counter-terrorism campaign directed against al Qaeda and its affiliates. Officially dubbed the “Global War on Terror” (GWOT), it is also been called, more appropriately, “the Long War,” and that is how it will be referred to here. The conflict has involved ground combat operations in Afghanistan, as well as ancillary actions in Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia, which are largely comprised of Special Forces actions and targeted strikes. In all of these theaters, the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) has increased dramatically over the years. The U.S. UAV inventory before the war in Afghanistan numbered in the low hundreds; today there are over 7000 in the fleet, with more delivered every day.¹ More commonly known to the public as “Drones,” the aircraft do not have a pilot onboard. They are controlled via a satellite link by a “pilot” and sensor operator, who can be almost anywhere in the world.² These aircraft have been used for reconnaissance and in recent years have taken on an armed role, being used in Yemen and Pakistan (among other countries) generally against high-level al Qaeda targets.

The American employment of lethal force in UAV operations outside a designated war zone has raised a number of ethical and legal questions. Such issues rarely restrain the actions of states who believe they are defending themselves, but are more important nonetheless because they influence the political framing of counter-terrorism as an element in the general relations of the countries involved. The rapid growth of UAV operations shows no sign of slowing, and the implications of their use, especially in Pakistan and Yemen, need to be continually examined if the United States

1. James DeShaw Rae, *Analyzing the Drone Debates: Targeted Killing, Remote Warfare, and Military Technology* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 13.

2. Mark Bowden, “The Killing Machines: How to Think about Drones,” *The Atlantic* (September, 2013): 61.

wishes to achieve its policy objectives with those states. Comparing the cases of Pakistan and Yemen will help bring together knowledge gained in studying each case separately.

B. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate how the use of UAVs as part of the counter-terrorism campaigns in Yemen and Pakistan has affected U.S. relations with those countries. These two governments are important partners for combatting terrorist organizations within their borders, but even so it is noteworthy that they have decided to so readily cooperate with U.S. UAV operations. Continuing UAV campaigns in these countries may greatly depend on the methods that Pakistan and Yemen use to manage the impact of these actions on their own societies, their commitment to which may be indicative of their true willingness to cooperate with U.S. foreign political aims.

Since the United States knows the major operating areas of al Qaeda and possesses the means to strike them directly, domestic politics prevent the adoption of a policy of U.S. non-intervention. American public opinion would likely not accept that the United States cannot take action against those who have attacked it because of the incapacity or reluctance of weaker states. That being so, the question arises whether the current arrangements between the United States and the Pakistani and Yemeni states are the best policy to combat terrorism in these countries. It is important to determine whether these partnerships are proving successful against al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups, or if policy changes could better support achieving American objectives.

C. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

Evaluating the changes in state-to-state relationships is not as simple as saying a relationship improved or declined. Certain factors, such as treaties, agreements, aid funding and military sales, support, and training, will provide some insight into the strength of a relationship. These factors will have net positive and negative effects on the relationships, though they will likely accrue differently to both sides and will likely benefit one side more than the other. It is possible that these political relationships over time will negatively affect the political aims of at least one side.

Given the turmoil in the regions in which UAVs are used, it would not be unreasonable to suppose that the effects of UAV use by the United States have caused certain political hardships for the governments of Yemen and Pakistan over the course of counter-terrorism operations within these countries. These hardships include popular civilian condemnation of U.S. strikes, anger with government cooperation with the United States, and increased recruiting support for the al Qaeda and Taliban organizations. These challenges may require Yemeni and Pakistani policy changes that impede cooperation with future counter-terrorism operations.

The degree of open cooperation between these states is the most likely source of positive benefits to these relationships. If policy is geared toward supporting stable states, free from terrorist group operations, UAVs could be used to provide intelligence sharing between these states to combat terrorism. This would indicate a very strong, trusting relationship between these countries. In the current paradigm, however, with Yemen on the verge of collapse and the tumultuous relationships between Pakistani and American intelligence apparatuses, this seems less likely, especially in the near term.

A certain level of negative effects will likely be acceptable to U.S. policy, so long as the net effect counters Al Qaeda's ability to operate within these countries. This may be a policy, however, which is too short sighted, trading the instant gratification of targeted strikes with tacit state cooperation, for long-term destabilization which would benefit the terrorist organizations.

D. RESEARCH DESIGN

In this thesis, I compare the use of force employing UAVs in Yemen and Pakistan, in order to determine what effects these policies have had on the political inter-state relationships with these countries. There are differences between these two countries, but they are the best choice for this examination because they are the two centers of U.S. UAV activity in the world outside of a combat zone. Looking specifically at applications of UAVs outside of declared combat areas is important, since their use as a weapons system in combat operations falls in a different level of international politics. The interesting characteristics of UAVs seem to allow their use inside these countries

without as much controversy at the state-to-state level as would manned aircraft or ground forces. The state-to-state relationships that accommodate this sub-state level of conflict is the focus of this research, to try and explain this seeming government level permissiveness toward UAVs.

Because this study is unclassified, the sources used to explore U.S. policy will be limited to the congressional record and other official publications, along with existing scholarship that has addressed the relationships between these countries, both before and after the implementation of UAV operations. With respect to the Yemeni and Pakistani side of the equation, there are two main factors at play: the governments' official positions, and their society's reactions to their relationships with the United States. Evaluating the societal effects of UAV use in these countries will rely largely on reports from people who have conducted field work in Pakistan and Yemen, and will have to be closely evaluated for bias and accuracy. There also is a significant quantity of news reporting that applies to these topics.

II. UNITED STATES UAV POLICY

There is little question as to what event provided the catalyst for events that led to the first use of armed UAVs in countries like Yemen and Pakistan. The al Qaeda attacks of September 11, 2001 (9/11) invoked a Pearl Harbor-like response from the American government, armed forces, and public, with outpourings of support and strong desires for retribution against those responsible. These events, which brought the United States to the brink of armed UAV use, began with a conventional conflict in Afghanistan aimed at isolating the terrorist threat posed by al Qaeda. From the beginning, however, American counter-terrorism was always conceived in global terms.

A. THE 2001 AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE

In the days after 9/11, Congress quickly passed a resolution that President George W. Bush signed into law on the 18th of September, 2001 entitled the “Authorization for Use of Military Force” (AUMF). The law says:

the President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.³

This law has been used extensively by both the Bush and Obama administrations to justify actions against terrorists, especially any al Qaeda branch or affiliate. Its first application was pursuing the sub-state group in Afghanistan being harbored by the Taliban government. Since there was no declaration of war between states, the action instead relies on the idea of non-international war between a state and a sub-state actor.⁴ America has made this distinction against al Qaeda and continues to stress its legal right

3. Authorization for Use of Military Force of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-40 (2001).

4. Sikander Ahmed Shah, *International Law and Drone Strikes in Pakistan: The Legal and Socio-political Aspects* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 12.

to use military force (instead of strictly law enforcement actions) against the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks.

B. UNDERSTANDING THE SELF-DEFENSE ARGUMENT

The AUMF specifically states that the 9/11 attacks “render it both necessary and appropriate that the United States exercise its rights to self-defense and to protect United States citizens both at home and abroad.”⁵ In addition, the UN Security Council (UNSC) passed resolutions condemning the attacks that referred to the U.S. right to individual or collective self-defense.⁶ These statements highlight the logic that justified using force in Afghanistan: America was attacked by a group that demonstrated it could attack from its training camps in Afghanistan and was expected to continue attacking in the absence of contrary action. This presents a “gray area” in the definition of self defense. The modern international paradigm as illustrated by the post-WWII formation of the UN is aimed at limiting instances of armed conflict by states, except in the exercise of the right to self-defense.⁷ Engaging the forces of a state that harbors an extremist group could easily be considered aggressive behavior that goes against the UN charter.

Calling the war in Afghanistan a case of self-defense is not all that controversial. The continued use of that same argument over time, however, especially to engage al Qaeda in countries that do not overtly harbor the group, does provide a source for controversy. The political moves by the United States in the immediate aftermath of the attacks attempted to justify the U.S. position in such a way as to not draw a condemnatory response from the UNSC. In the process of developing customary international law, “the absence of challenge to the U.S. asserted right of self-defense could be taken to indicate acquiescence in an expansion of the right to include defense against governments that harbor or support organized terrorist groups that commit armed

5. Authorization for Use of Military Force of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-40 (2001).

6. Myra Williamson, *Terrorism, War, and International Law: The Legality of the Use of Force against Afghanistan in 2001* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), 192.

7 Shah, *International Law*, 14.

attacks in other countries.”⁸ The outpouring of international support after the 9/11 attacks provided America with the opportunity to pursue this course of action and set the stage for future operations in Yemen and Pakistan to be framed from the perspective of exercising self-defense against al Qaeda.

C. UAVS OR SOLDIERS?

The decision to go after al Qaeda in Afghanistan—after the Taliban did not meet the unconditional U.S. demands to turn over those responsible for 9/11—resulted in a 13-year war in which 2355 U.S. servicemen and women died and over 20,000 were wounded in action.⁹ These were troops who were directly supporting operations to root out al Qaeda within the territorial bounds of Afghanistan. When the enemy would slip into areas beyond the immediate reach of U.S. forces, such as Pakistani and Yemeni tribal areas, the question became how to follow, track, and kill al Qaeda and Taliban members without violating state sovereignty and angering the countries needed to continue prosecuting this fight.

Early on, armed UAVs were something of a novelty—a new tool that had never been used operationally. Before 2001, UAVs had been used for reconnaissance and, in the first Gulf War, for spotting the fall of shells from U.S. battleships.¹⁰ In the opening weeks of the Afghanistan campaign in November of 2001, an armed *Predator* was used to kill al Qaeda’s third-ranking military commander, Mohammed Atef.¹¹ This was a proof of concept that UAVs were effective at conducting targeted strikes against specific individuals. In the next year, the *Predator*’s reach would extend outside a combat zone to

8. Frederick L. Kirgis, “Israel’s Intensified Military Campaign against Terrorism,” *Insights* 6, no. 19 (2001), <http://www.asil.org/insights/volume/6/issue/19/israels-intensified-military-campaign-against-terrorism>.

9. U.S. Department of Defense, “Casualty Numbers,” Defense.gov, accessed March 24, 2015, www.defense.gov/News/casualty.pdf.

10. Ted Shelsby, “Iraqi Soldiers Surrender to AAI’s Drones,” *Baltimore Sun*, March 2, 1991, <http://articles.baltimoresun.com>.

11. John Kaag and Sarah Kreps, *Drone Warfare* (Malden: Polity Press, 2014), 19.

Yemen. The difference between the two strikes, as viewed by America, was the nature of the states in which they were carried out. Afghanistan had harbored terrorists, and the Taliban had direct links to the group that attacked America. Yemen had similar extremist groups operating within its borders that had also attacked U.S. assets, but contrary to Afghanistan, Yemen had agreed to support U.S. efforts immediately following 9/11. Yemen allowed U.S. intelligence to operate in the country to find the people responsible for the *USS Cole* (DDG-67) bombing. There was significant American public demand for justice for 9/11. There was not the same level of outcry after bombings in Kenya or the Cole attack.

For this first non-combat strike, the White House and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) would have weighed the political risks from a secretive UAV program that minimized in-country footprint against the risks of small Special Forces units on the ground to attempt capture. The official U.S. stance is that it prefers to capture terrorists, rather than to kill them, in order to interrogate them and exploit any information gained against future targets.¹² This preference is tempered by the prospect of domestic political repercussions, which are lower when no American lives are at risk (especially when compared to operations designed to capture someone alive). Some even argue that in cases where the mission objectives are equal, such as air strikes, there is a moral obligation to use UAVs instead of accepting unnecessary risk to the life of a pilot in a conventional aircraft.¹³ While capturing and killing are different mission end states, this availability of riskless killing likely has some pull when determining the final course of action.

12. Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President at the National Defense University," May 23, 2013, the White House, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/05/23/remarks-president-national-defense-university>.

13. Bradley Jay Strawser, *Killing by Remote Control* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 19–20.

Another factor leading into the initial UAV policy is still in play today, as indicated by President Obama in a speech at the National Defense University in 2013:

Al Qaeda and its affiliates try to gain foothold in some of the most distant and unforgiving places on Earth...in some of these places—such as parts of Somalia and Yemen—the state only has the most tenuous reach into the territory. In other cases, the state lacks the capacity or will to take action.¹⁴

In this instance, the United States is evaluating the likelihood that a host state can effectively counter a threat to America or its interests. In the case of Afghanistan, when the Taliban offered to try Osama bin Laden in an Afghan court, the American response indicated that that would be insufficient to guarantee the future safety of the United States or the dismantling of al Qaeda's network, as America had demanded.¹⁵

In the end, the United States did conduct a UAV strike outside a combat zone in Yemen, where a ground presence would have likely caused greater consequences to U.S. policy. The UAV was also likely used due to its long endurance time (24 hours for the *Predator*) to confirm the target was correct, and due to the clandestine nature of the UAV program. These benefits in a simple single case scenario lead to a logical conclusion that UAVs should be the preferred tool for surgical, high-level target strikes aimed at degrading al Qaeda's leadership. The subsequent chapters of this thesis will address the longer-term consequences of UAV use as applied to general U.S. policies in Yemen and Pakistan.

14. Obama, "National Defense University."

15. Williamson, *Terrorism*, 171.

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III. YEMEN AND AL QAEDA IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

A. HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The country of Yemen in some ways is an oddity in the Arabian Peninsula and the wider Persian Gulf region. The modern incarnation of government is a republic, which represents a deeply divided country. This type of government is relatively new for Northern Yemen, as it was a separate state governed by an Imam from the Zaydi sect (a group of Shi'a Muslims predominantly from northern Yemen) for over 1000 years, even as part of the Ottoman Empire. Shi'i Muslims account for approximately one-third of the current Yemeni population and remain centralized in the northwest portion of the country.¹⁶ The remainder of the country is predominantly Sunni, occupying the eastern and southern portions of the country, including the port city of Aden (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Map of Yemen¹⁷

16. Lucas Winter, "Conflict in Yemen: Simple People, Complicated Circumstances," Middle East Policy 18, no.1 (Spring 2011), 104.

17. "Map of Yemen," Bizbillia.com, Accessed March 24, 2015, <http://travel.agency.bizbilla.com/map-by-countries/allcountriesmaps/yemen-political-map.jpg>.

North Yemen's Imam was overthrown in 1962 in a *coup d'état* that left the Shi'i minority in power and precipitated the North Yemen civil war. The war pitted the new government against tribal fighters who wished to restore the Imam. The government was supported by Egypt's Gamal Nasser and was heavily influenced by Arab-nationalist ideas.¹⁸ The close ties with Egypt coupled with a disorganized tribal resistance allowed the government to maintain power and enforce its legitimacy in the Arabian Peninsula.

South Yemen was a British protectorate and became independent in 1967. It immediately took on a Marxist character as the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (DPRY) and courted support from the Soviet Union. The impending fall of the U.S.S.R. led the DPRY to merge with the North in 1990, to prevent the economic collapse and political isolation that could follow the loss of their patron state.¹⁹ The unified state would be run by Ali Abdullah Saleh, who had risen to power in North Yemen in 1978. Despite the poor tenures of the previous three North Yemen presidents (two were assassinated and one held the office for three weeks), Saleh managed not only to hold the office through the merger, but would be in the top government position until he was finally forced out in 2012.²⁰ Saleh managed to expertly wield political power in the country; somehow managed to keep the tribes, southern separatists, and Zaydis appeased or controlled for over 30 years. This included the notable 1994 Civil War, where Saleh used a jihadi force in addition to his regular military to subdue the socialist South's attempts to secede.²¹ He is often quoted as saying that balancing the many concerns in Yemen is akin to "dancing on the heads of snakes,"²² as if any political miss-step would have resulted in disaster.

18. W. Andrew Terrill, *The Conflicts in Yemen and U.S. National Security* (Carlisle, U.S. Army War College, 2011), 5.

19. Ibid., 6.

20. Ibid., 6–7.

21. Gregory D. Johnsen, *The Last Refuge: Yemen, Al-Qaeda, and America's War in Arabia* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013), 42.

22. Terrill, *Conflicts in Yemen*, 8; Victoria Clark, *Yemen: Dancing on the Heads of Snakes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 5.

B. AL QAEDA IN YEMEN

The story of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula is really the story of modern jihad. Yemen's tradition of jihadis started when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. For young men in the former North Yemen, participating in the war became something of a rite of passage.²³ After the Soviets withdrew, many trained jihadis returned to their homes in Yemen, and Osama bin Laden realized he now had a force with which he could attempt to attain his goal, based on a portion of Islam's Sahih Muslim Hadith: "Expel the Jews and Christians from the Arabian Peninsula."²⁴ Bin Laden was furious when the Saudis allowed U.S. troops into the Kingdom as part of operation Desert Shield, instead of using his soldiers. He was kept in check in within the Kingdom's limits by the royal family, so he instead created security problems in Yemen, such that in 1993 the Pentagon pulled all forces from Aden. The lesson bin Laden took from the experience was simple: "he did nothing in Saudi Arabia and the Americans stayed. But when he hit them in Yemen, they ran."²⁵ Al Qaeda would double down on these tactics, leading to 1998 attacks on U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Yemen was used as a coordination base for the attacks.²⁶ The organization would again target U.S. assets once they resumed visiting the Yemeni coast.

1. USS Cole Bombing

The port city of Aden is arguably the most important city in Yemen. It is a central hub of Yemen's economy, and a stronghold of the southern Sunni community. In the most recent turmoil in the country, the government, as well as the embassies from all of the Gulf States (except Iran) moved there after Sana'a was taken over by Houthis.²⁷ In

23. Johnsen, *Last Refuge*, 7.

24. Sahih Muslim Hadith, 19–4366, <http://www.hadithcollection.com/sahihmuslim/147-Sahih%20Muslim%20Book%2019.%20Jihad%20and%20Expedition/12735-sahih-muslim-book-019-hadith-number-4366.html>; Johnsen, *Last Refuge*, 24.

25. Johnsen, *Last Refuge*, 30.

26. Leila Hudson, Colin S. Owens, David J. Callen, "Drone Warfare in Yemen: Fostering Emirates through Counterterrorism?" *Middle East Policy* 19, no.3 (2012): 146.

27. "UAE, Kuwait move embassies to Yemen's Aden," *Al Arabiya*, February 27, 2015 <http://english.alarabiya.net>.

late 2000, the destroyer *USS Cole* pulled into Aden for refueling and re-provisioning. During her visit, she was attacked by members of Al Qaeda, who used a small boat laden with explosives to blow a massive hole in the vessel's side. Seventeen American sailors died, and the ship was nearly lost. U.S. ships no longer use Aden as a supply port.

The attack was allegedly masterminded by Abu Ali al-Harithi, a leading lieutenant of Osama Bin Laden and the highest member of the al Qaeda branch in Yemen at the time.²⁸ Al-Harithi was at the top of a CIA target list given directly to the Yemeni president in November of 2001 during his visit to Washington, DC.²⁹ A U.S. policy was reiterated to the Yemeni delegation at this meeting that had been stated in President George W. Bush's September 20, 2001, address to Congress "Every nation, in every region now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists."³⁰ The CIA then began work with Yemen's security service, the Political Security Office (PSO) in a combined manhunt would lead to the first armed drone strike outside of a warzone targeting a specific individual.

2. The First Strike

After the attacks of September 11th 2001, the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan showed to what lengths the country was willing to go in order to combat al Qaeda and attempt to eliminate the threat it posed. Yemen was given a similar option as Afghanistan had been—cooperate and turn over the men on the CIA's lists or it would draw U.S. direct intervention.³¹ Less than a year after Saleh's trip to Washington, the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA), working with the PSO, tracked one of al-Harithi's phones to an area in Marib, 100 miles east of Sana'a. A UAV from the base in Djibouti was on station

28. Brian Glynn Williams, *Predators* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2013), 42; Hudson, Owens, Callen, "Drone Warfare in Yemen," 146; Johnsen, *Last Refuge*, 91.

29. Johnsen, *Last Refuge*, 90.

30. Ibid., 91; George W. Bush, "Speech Before Joint Session of Congress," Accessed Mar 25 2015, <http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/09.20.01.html>.

31. Johnsen, *Last Refuge*, 91; Terrill, *Conflicts in Yemen*, 52.

within hours, and with President Saleh's blessing, struck and killed al-Harithi and five others he had been meeting with on November 3, 2002.³²

Initially, Yemeni officials wanted to keep the attack secret, a condition to Saleh's permission for the action, choosing to blame the deaths on an accidental detonation of explosives in the vehicle.³³ Shortly after the strike, however, America broke that agreement when then Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz referred to U.S. involvement in the explosion, saying it was:

A very successful tactical operation...we've just got to keep the pressure on everywhere we're able to, and we've got to deny the sanctuaries everywhere we're able to and we've got to put pressure on every government that is giving these people support to get out of that business.³⁴

This announcement occurred two days before a U.S. midterm election, indicating that the Bush administration wanted to show a success against terrorism, and while UAVs were not specifically mentioned, the story had damaged the Yemeni plans for secrecy. Brig. Gen. Yahya M. Al Mutawakel, then deputy secretary general of the ruling People's Congress party in Yemen, illuminates Yemeni frustration at U.S. arrogance in these interactions: "This is why we are reluctant to work closely with [the United States]. They don't consider the internal circumstances in Yemen. In security matters, you don't want to alert the enemy."³⁵

Seemingly, the United States had used Yemen as a means to an end, and while some intelligence cooperation continued, no further UAV strikes would be carried out in the country for seven years.³⁶ Al Qaeda would continue low level operations in the

32. Johnsen, *Last Refuge*, 121–122; Terrill, *Conflicts in Yemen*, 52.

33. Johnsen, *Last Refuge*, 123; Clark, *Yemen*, 196.

34. "U.S. kills al-Qaeda suspects in Yemen," *USA Today*, November 5, 2002, <http://usatoday30.usatoday.com>.

35. Phillip Smucker, "The intrigue behind the drone strike," *The Christian Science Monitor*, November 12, 2002, <http://www.csmonitor.com>.

36. Bill Roggio and Bob Barry, "Charting the data for US airstrikes in Yemen, 2002–2015," accessed January 9, 2015, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/yemen-strikes>.

country, but with Aden closed as far as the U.S. Navy was concerned, the terrorist threat was now someone else's problem—al Qaeda shifted to Saudi Arabia.³⁷

C. AQAP, SAUDI ARABIA AND THE UNITED STATES

The important relationship between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the United States is a contributing factor of American policy toward Yemen. Saudi Arabia's role in global oil markets make it far more important to U.S. foreign policy decisions than Yemen's strategic position on the Red Sea's southern choke point, the Bab al Mandeb ("Strait of Tears"). One data point that illustrates the combined interests of KSA and the United States in Yemen played out in the UNSC in the lead up to the first Gulf War. After Saddam Husein invaded Kuwait, Saleh was reluctant to back the UNSC resolution condemning the occupation. This drew a warning from Saudi and American diplomats, indicating that "this will be the most expensive 'no' vote [Yemen] ever cast."³⁸ Within days of Yemen's abstention, \$70 million of U.S. aid was suspended and, by early 1991, at least 750,000 Yemeni workers were expelled from KSA.³⁹ In a state whose economy relied in large part on foreign aid money and remittances, the blow from these losses showed how vulnerable Yemen was to foreign policies. This also cemented the importance of the Saudi regime in matters of Gulf security and cooperation, a lesson Yemen learned the hard way.

Al Qaeda was and continues to be a major Saudi concern in the region. After falling from the U.S. field of view after the 2002 strike, al Qaeda elements from Yemen had begun a series of attacks in the Kingdom to the north. They targeted not only residential compounds occupied by Westerners working in the oil industry, but also government buildings and Saudi oil facilities.⁴⁰ Saudi security forces cracked down hard

37. Mark Mazzetti, *The Way of the Knife*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2013), 213.

38. Johnsen, *Last Refuge*, 26.

39. Christina Hellmich, "Fighting Al Qaeda in Yemen? Rethinking the Nature of the Islamist Threat and the Effectiveness of U.S. Counter Terrorism Strategy," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 35 (2012): 625; David S. Sorenson, *An Introduction to the Modern Middle East: History, Religion, Political Economy, Politics*, 2nd ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2014), 199.

40. Mazzetti, *Way of the Knife*, 214.

under the orders of then assistant interior minister, Prince Muhammad bin Nayef (who is now Deputy Crown Prince of KSA, as well as minister of the interior).⁴¹ The prince's aggressive stance made him a friend of both the Bush and then the Obama administrations.

By 2009, the internal Saudi problem was largely contained, but Prince bin Nayef warned American diplomat Richard Holbrooke that Yemen was where al Qaeda would need to be dealt with next.⁴² The organization regrouped in Yemen in 2009 as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), and had continued attempting operations against both countries. Bin Nayef explained that AQAP was gaining influence in the eastern tribal areas where the Yemeni state—president Saleh in particular—was losing influence.⁴³ Yemen was quickly progressing toward state failure. Given the widespread availability of arms and men in Yemen, al Qaeda elements there had provided the majority of manpower and weapons for operations inside KSA, justifying the Saudi's continued concern.⁴⁴

Another actor driving Saudi and Yemeni politics are the Shi'a Houthi rebels from Northern Yemen, who have presented additional security problems for KSA. There have been several rounds of conflicts along the border the first directly between Yemen and the Houthis in 2003, the latest involving Saudi forces in 2010.⁴⁵ In an effort to isolate this Shi'a group, Saudi Arabia has built a fence along their southern border and redeployed military and national guard forces to defend it.⁴⁶ Former president Saleh came from the northern Zaydi sect and helped manage the effects of the Houthi groups in order to maintain some support from KSA. In the wake of Saleh's ouster in 2012, and his replacement by former vice president Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi, himself a southerner,

41. Ibid.; Anthony H. Cordesman, Robert M. Shelala II, and Omar Mohamed, "Yemen and U.S. Security" *Center for Strategic & International Studies*, August 8, 2013, 9.

42. Mazzetti, *Way of the Knife*, 214.

43. Ibid.

44. Terrill, *Conflicts in Yemen*, 41.

45. Ibid., 18; Cordesman, Shelala, Mohamed, "Yemen and U.S. Security," 8.

46. Cordesman, Shelala, Mohamed, "Yemen and U.S. Security," 8.

the Houthi movement began again to grow. Their takeover of Sana'a and a majority of northern Yemen can only draw more Saudi attention.

The Saudi's have long suspected the Houthis of receiving support from the Shi'i government of Iran.⁴⁷ In the recent turmoil, KSA has withdrawn its aid funding to Yemen, pending negotiations to stabilize the failing state.⁴⁸ At the same time, while denying pre-takeover support, the new Houthi government has made agreements with Iran for a significant amount of aid for the Houthis, as well as engaging with Iran's national airline to conduct direct flights to Sana'a.⁴⁹ Whether there was Iranian involvement before the Houthi coup can be disputed; there certainly is now a significant interest by the Iranians in Northern Yemen, only adding to the tensions between the rival Gulf powers.

D. THE ARAB SPRING AND POLITICAL TRANSITION

Yemen faced a significant political transition, which the United States and KSA watched closely. Part of the wider Arab Spring movement which had begun in Tunisia, Yemenis began similar protests against the government and Saleh in particular, calling for the end of his 33-year reign. When Hosni Mubarak resigned, ending a 30-year dictatorship in Egypt, Yemeni protesters pressed harder for change. Saleh's aids had distributed a fresh round of bribes to local tribal shaykhs to ensure their loyalty, but it was not enough.⁵⁰ Eventually, the protesters clashed with troops loyal to Saleh, who opened fire killing 52 protesters.⁵¹ This prompted generals and soldiers to abandon the president and protect the demonstrators.

47. Cordesman, Shelala, Mohamed, "Yemen and U.S. Security," 8.

48. Ahmed al Omran and Maria abi Habib, "Saudi Arabia Suspends Aid to Yemen After Houthi Rebels Take Over," *The Wall Street Journal*, Dec 4, 2014, <http://www.wsj.com>. The information in this thesis addresses the Houthi led rebellion through April of 2015. Conditions in Yemen will change rapidly as a result of what is essentially another Yemeni Civil War as the months of 2015 pass.

49. "First Iran flight arrives in Houthi-held Yemeni Capital," *Al Jazeera*, Mar 1, 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com>; "Houthis Say they have Secured Aid Package from Iran," *Al Jazeera*, Mar 14, 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com>.

50. Johnsen, *Last Refuge*, 270.

51. Ibid.

Three months prior to the upheaval, an AQAP leaders in Yemen had proposed to bin Laden the possibility of taking territory in order to establish an Islamic State in Yemen. At that time, Bin Laden had rejected the idea for lack of support in Yemen, but with the government and military in flux, there was now room to act. The group came up with a new brand—Ansar al-Shariah or the supporters of Islamic law—aimed not at just attacking the West, but providing serious governance and public support to the eastern provinces.⁵² A direct ground offensive to take Zanjubar, Abyan province’s capital, began in late May of 2011 with stunning success. Only a small group of soldiers held out in the city.⁵³ In the absence of a unified Yemeni military, America intervened, dropping supplies to the isolated soldiers and the Saudis began air attacks on al Qaeda positions in the area.⁵⁴ Not until September 10 did Yemeni forces (under enormous Saudi and U.S. pressure) move into the area to push back al Qaeda.⁵⁵ Despite AQAP’s tactical loss, their attempts to govern in Abyan through Ansar al-Sharia show an increased capability to pursue political goals that pose real challenges to Yemen’s central government. While terrorist actions continue, they are now becoming part of a true insurgency movement aimed at goals that were unreachable before Arab spring turmoil.

If al Qaeda could see that Saleh’s days were numbered, so too could the United States and Saudi Arabia. Together with the remaining states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), they attempted several times to get Saleh to leave in exchange for immunity, thereby allowing the country to resume normal activities.⁵⁶ Saleh held on to power, even after he had to flee to KSA for medical treatment after a bomb assassination attempt injured him. Finally, in November, Saleh signed the agreement to step down, which began a 3-month transition period to his successor, Vice President Hadi.⁵⁷

52. Johnsen, *Last Refuge*, 271; Hudson, Owens, Callen, “Drone Warfare in Yemen,” 152.

53. Jeremy M. Sharp, “Yemen: Background and U.S. Relations,” *Congressional Research Service*, January 21, 2015, 31.

54. Johnsen, *Last Refuge*, 281–282.

55. *Ibid.*, 282.

56. *Ibid.*, 278.

57. Sharp, “Yemen,” 32.

There has been a noticeable increase in UAV strikes in the years since Hadi took office. Hadi was more than willing to cooperate with American and Saudi efforts against AQAP, and in return he received the international backing he would need to stay in power against Saleh’s friends and relatives who were still in the government.⁵⁸ Even today in exile, Saleh is still a powerful figure in Yemeni politics, if pulling only some of the strings.⁵⁹

E. U.S. FOREIGN AID AND MILITARY SUPPORT TO YEMEN

The United States did not provide much in the way of aid to Yemen prior to 2009. Table 2 shows the progression of U.S. aid money from Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 through estimated 2014 totals.

Table 1. U.S. Combined Aid to Yemen⁶⁰

Fiscal Year	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014*
U.S. Combined Aid Dollars (Millions)	56	25.8	123.4	299	159.7	352.3	316.2	221.4

A significant increase in FY2009 coincides with the resuming of UAV operations in the country. The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) explains the increase in FY2010 as a response to the December 25, 2009, airliner bombing attempt. The subsequent decline in FY2011 was due to political turmoil during the Arab Spring movement, and was primarily a decrease in foreign military assistance, though it resumed in FY2012 with the installation of a new President and his promise of renewed efforts against AQAP.⁶¹

58. Johnsen, *Last Refuge*, 286.

59. Sharp, “Yemen,” 32.

60. Government Accountability Office, “Uncertain Political and Security Situation Challenges U.S. Efforts to Implement a Comprehensive Strategy in Yemen,” February, 2012, 10–24; Sharp, “Yemen,” 29.
*FY2014 figure is estimated.

61. GAO “Uncertain Political,” 5.

It is worth noting that, with Yemen's GDP being mostly reliant on dwindling oil reserves and foreign aid, any interruption—like the losses of 1990—would have devastating consequences to Yemen's economy. Some have suggested that since much of the U.S. aid is contingent on counterterrorism, Yemen stands to benefit from exaggerating the threat posed by AQAP.⁶²

F. THE CASE OF ANWAR AL-AWLAKI

One of the most publicized cases of UAV strikes was the September 30, 2011, strike that killed noted AQAP cleric and U.S. citizen Anwar al-Awlaki. Only one U.S. citizen has reportedly been killed by UAVs in Pakistan, whereas three instances involving U.S. citizens occurred in Yemen.⁶³ Even the first strike in 2002 inadvertently killed Kamal Darwish, a Yemeni native with U.S. citizenship, although he was not known to be with al-Harithi at the time.⁶⁴ The United States had been tracking Awlaki for years, since from Yemen he had allegedly connected with U.S. Army Major Nidal Hasan, influencing his actions in the 2009 shooting at Fort Hood, Texas, where 13 people died.⁶⁵ Awlaki had been a cleric in the United States, and in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 was outspoken against violent Islam. By 2009, his rhetoric had changed drastically against America, and he had moved to Yemen and was working with al Qaeda.⁶⁶ Awlaki had also been involved with Umar Farouk Abdu Mutallab in the December 25, 2009, plot to bring down an airliner over Detroit with a bomb from Yemen.⁶⁷ This landed Awlaki on the Obama administration's kill list. As with the 2002 strike, the Yemeni defense ministry said that Yemeni forces had hunted down Awlaki, leaving the exact details of his death up in the air, though most assumed UAVs seen by local tribes orbiting the area

62. Hellmich, "Fighting Al Qaeda," 625.

63. "Drone strikes killed American citizens in Yemen, Pakistan," *The Associated Press*, May 22, 2013, <http://www.wjla.com/>.

64. Johnsen, *Last Refuge*, 123.

65. "Anwar al-Awlaki killed in Yemen," *Al Jazeera*, September 30, 2011, <http://www.aljazeera.com>.

66. David Johnston and Scott Shane, "U.S. Knew of Suspect's Tie to Radical Cleric," *The New York Times*, November 9, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com>.

67. Johnsen, *Last Refuge*, 290.

where Awlaki died were involved.⁶⁸ In addition, the strike killed Samir Khan, a Pakistani U.S. citizen, who was the editor of al Qaeda's *Inspire* magazine. However, this was not a crippling blow to AQAP, which has continued gaining ground in Eastern Yemen, or to *Inspire*, which has put out several more editions since Khan's death.

The reason this specific case is relevant to the political issues surrounding UAV use in Yemen is that it reinforces the United States in its own perspective of its legal rights and rationale for using these weapons in a "non-interstate war" with al Qaeda. Immediately after the Ft. Hood shooting, the U.S. Senate passed a resolution calling on the president "to give sufficient weight to the situation in Yemen in efforts to prevent terrorist attacks on the United States, United States allies, and Yemeni civilians."⁶⁹ By December of 2009, the UAV strikes against AQAP had resumed.⁷⁰ When a U.S. Department of Justice (DoJ) memo used as justification for targeting U.S. citizens was made public, it noted all of the previous rationale for national self-defense. In addition, the memo directly addressed the issue of constitutional due process and that a citizen's interest in his or her life "must be balanced against the United States' interest in forestalling the threat of violence and death to other Americans."⁷¹ It also stipulated a requirement prior to taking lethal action is an assessment that it is infeasible to capture the target.⁷² Yemen's instability and lack of control in rural areas where AQAP operates seemingly tie America to the tactics of UAV strikes, rather than hoping the unreliable Yemeni security apparatus can capture terrorists or risking U.S. lives in more complex operations to do so.

68. "Anwar al-Awlaki killed," *Al Jazeera*.

69. S. Res. 341, 111th Cong. (2009)

70. Stephen W. Day, *Regionalism and Rebellion in Yemen*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 258.

71. Department of Justice, "Lawfulness of a Lethal Operation Directed Against a U.S. Citizen who is a Senior Operational Leader of Al-Qa'ida or an Associated Force," in *Drones and Targeted Killing: Legal, Moral, and Geopolitical Issues*, ed. Marjorie Cohn (Northampton: Olive Branch Press, 2015), 264.

72. DoJ, "Lawfulness of a Lethal Operation," 269.

G. COLLATERAL DAMAGE EFFECTS

Direct intervention in Yemen has fueled a strong anti-American sentiment among a significant portion of the population.⁷³ This is not a new position for the United States, which has had troubles with public opinion in other countries. The endemic anti-Americanism of Yemeni public opinion long ante-dates the use of drone for counter-terrorism, which suggests that, with respect to mollifying public attitudes, it scarcely matters whether UAVs are more effective than other means at avoiding civilian casualties. But this does not mean that drone strikes do not serve as are recruiting tool for AQAP, which routinely employs them to dramatize what it wishes to portray as the indiscriminate and illegitimate use of American power. The estimated number of strikes, civilians killed and total people killed in Yemen through the end of 2014, based on open source reporting, is presented in Table 2.

73. W. Andrew Terrill, "Drones over Yemen: Weighing Military Benefits and Political Costs," *Parameters* 43, no.1 (2013): 21.

Table 2. Data from UAV Strikes in Yemen⁷⁴

Source/ Year	Strikes	Total Killed	Civilians Killed
The New America Foundation			
2002	1	6	0
2003–2008	0	0	0
2009	2	105	41
2010	1	8	6
2011	12	127	4
2012	56	542	17
2013	26	141	15
2014	19	153	4
Total	117	1082	87
The Long War Journal			
2002	1	6	0
2003–2008	0	0	0
2009	2	55	14
2010	4	16	6
2011	10	81	0
2012	41	225	35
2013	26	116	17
2014	23	144	6
Total	107	643	78
The Bureau of Investigative Journalism			
Total	109	639	96

Data provided from the three sources average out to 112 strikes, with 82 of 862 of those killed being civilians. While the less than 10% collateral damage reported in these figures is indicative of how precise these weapons can be, that 10% figure has created significant political capital for AQAP, especially in rural areas.⁷⁵

Certain cases show that intelligence failures on the ground in Yemen can have damaging effects on American policy goals. For example, two weeks after the strike that

74. Table derived from Micha Zenko “Reforming U.S. Drone Strike Policies,” *Council on Foreign Relations* Special Report no. 63 (2013): 13; Data from New America Foundation, “Drone Wars Yemen,” accessed January 9, 2015, <http://www.newamerica.net>; Roggio and Barry, “U.S. Airstrikes in Yemen,” The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, “Get the Data: Drone Wars,” accessed January 9, 2015, <http://www.thebureauinvestigates.com>.

75. Zenko, “Reforming U.S. Drone Policies,” 11.

killed al-Awlaki, there was another strike targeting an Egyptian named Ibrahim al-Banna, who was allegedly planning a new attack.⁷⁶ The missile instead struck a group of nine teenagers around a campfire, including Awlaki's American-born son, Abd al-Rahman, killing him and his cousin.⁷⁷ This coincidence was framed by AQAP to paint a vicious picture of U.S. tactics to Yemenis.

Another collateral damage case illustrating the benefits AQAP reaps from these intelligence shortcomings occurred on August 29, 2012, in the village of Khashamir. UAVs that had been tracking three assumed AQAP members attacked late at night, firing 4 missiles killing the three men and two other "fellows" who happened to be present.⁷⁸ Unfortunately, those two fellows were a local traffic policeman Walid Abdullah bin Ai Jaber, and his cousin Salim bin Ahmed Ali Jaber, the local Imam who preached against violent Islamism and AQAP.⁷⁹ The strike was deep in AQAP-influenced territory in the eastern province of Hadhramaut, where the American and Yemeni governments have few points of influence.⁸⁰

Though the data indicates that these cases are not the norm, they are unfortunately not isolated incidents, and are spread among Yemenis more than are the bad deeds of AQAP. AQAP does not even need to push propaganda in villages like Khashamir, where people fear going out to markets or sending their children to school.⁸¹ At the same time as it presents a ruthless image of America, AQAP has gone around areas like Abyan province—places where it holds some sway—and begun conducting public works projects as a means of garnering more support from a region long underserved by central governments.⁸² In some cases, AQAP projects have provided water and electric lines to

76. Johnsen, *Last Refuge*, 284.

77. Ibid.

78. Human Rights Watch, "Between a Drone and Al-Qaeda: The Civilian Cost of U.S. Targeted Killings in Yemen," *Human Rights Watch*, <http://www.hrw.org>, 62.

79. Ibid.

80. Rebecca Murray, "Anger at U.S. drone war continues in Yemen," *Al Jazeera*, June 7, 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com>.

81. Human Rights Watch, "Between a Drone," 66; Murray, "Anger at U.S."

82. Johnsen, *Last Refuge*, 279.

houses and villages that had neither, and in a country whose water is expected to run out within a decade, this incentivizes populations to be sympathetic to if not supportive of AQAP.⁸³ Al Qaeda is gaining political control over real sections of territory in Eastern Yemen, lessening the ability of the central Yemeni government to effectively work with its population to limit the spread of al Qaeda. The continuation of this trend will only increase U.S. reliance on UAVs and limit the intelligence available to prosecute AQAP in Yemen.

H. SUMMARY

The information presented in this chapter is largely a historical context for understanding current international politics concerning Yemen. There are several important points to take away from this brief recounting. Yemen is a complex system of political alliances between tribes, political parties, the military and elements of the government. The state is limited in its ability to govern by the conditions of these relationships and by its reliance on certain elements over others. This limited control of the political space in Yemen has provided conditions conducive to insurgency as is now being carried out by the Houthis in the north and AQAP supported Ansar al-Sharia in the east. Yemen is in this position due to a failing economy and reliance on foreign aid, which often comes with conditions that hinder the government's ability to engage with certain groups.

States wishing to interact on the global stage with Yemen must at the very least understand that these internal relationships exist and that the central government is limited in its power to conduct the business of a nation-state in the modern sense. U.S. and Saudi engagement against AQAP and the Houthis has further alienated elements of the population against government attempts to impose rule of law. The limited support of the population presents serious barriers to intelligence operations necessary to accurately engage terrorist groups in support of shoring up Yemeni control. UAVs are just an symptom of U.S. policy attempts to do something about the problems in Yemen while

83. Johnsen, *Last Refuge*, 279.

minimizing the actual amount of resources used to do so. If the situation in Yemen does not improve soon, the United States may end up spending significantly more on a larger problem than if they had focused their efforts more economically and accurately at the beginning of these troubles.

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IV. PAKISTAN

A. THE UNITED STATES' ON AND OFF RELATIONSHIP WITH PAKISTAN

Pakistan's position at the crossroads of central and south Asia, as well as its proximity to the Persian Gulf and Middle East make it a strategically important location with respect to U.S. interests on the far side of the world (see figure 2). South Asia in general is an area with few socio-cultural ties to the U.S. and sit in vastly differing political arenas. While Pakistan sees itself as a world player with significant contribution to the global structure, U.S. policies are generally directed toward short term objectives in the region. A review of the back and forth history of the relationship between these two states shows that both their foreign policies are accurately characterized as “largely based on self-serving reasons rather than mutually congruent objectives.”⁸⁴



Figure 2. Map of Pakistan and Region⁸⁵

84. A. Z. Hilali, *U.S.-Pakistan Relationship: Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005), 231.

85. “Map of Pakistan,” CIA World Factbook, accessed April 6, 2015, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pk.html>.

1. Initial U.S.-Pakistan Relations

Pakistan's birth and infancy came at a time when the United States viewed every foreign policy decision through the lens of the Cold War. India seemed to be the logical choice to counter Soviet and communist influence in South Asia, being four times the size of Pakistan in both territory and population, and India had more stable democratic government and ideals.⁸⁶ The trouble with India was their reluctance to give up a policy of non-alignment in the struggle between the great powers, which produced generally cordial Indo-Soviet relations, particularly after Stalin's death.⁸⁷ This led the United States to foster a relationship with Pakistan, its next best option in South Asia. Pakistan had attempted to present itself as a viable anti-communist partner in order to draw U.S. aid money to support a growing military structure.

From the beginning, the U.S.-Pakistan relationship has displayed a significant disparity of outlook between the two sides. The United States provided aid and signed a bilateral agreement of cooperation with Pakistan as a measure of exercising political influence against the Soviets in South Asia. The Pakistanis saw this agreement and other military support policies as a solid backing of their territorial and political sovereignty in the region, and not just against communism.⁸⁸ When Pakistan engaged in a second war in Kashmir against India in 1965, they assumed that America would continue this support. Instead, the United States adopted a neutral stance and suspended aid to both sides, a move seen as abandonment in Pakistan.⁸⁹ Drawing from this experience, Pakistan learned that their best political option was not to choose just one ally in international politics, but to follow India's lead and have a multilateral stance open to the three major players (U.S., China, and Russia).⁹⁰ This episode in international relations should have indicated to the

86. Michael Rubin, "When Realities Collide: Differing U.S.-Pakistan Threat Perceptions," in *Pakistan: the U.S., Geopolitics and Grand Strategies*, ed. Usama Butt and Julian Schofield (New York: Pluto Press, 2012), 46–47.

87. Christophe Jaffrelot, *A History of Pakistan and its Origins* (London: Anthem Press, 2002), 99.

88. Rubin, "Realities Collide," 48.

89. Jaffrelot, *History of Pakistan*, 103.

90. *Ibid.*

United States that Pakistan did not see these issues as primarily related to the Cold War, but rather to their security posture against India—a concern that continues to define Pakistan’s political moves.

2. Jihad as a Pakistani Political Tool

The wars in Kashmir show the repeated implementation of an asset that indicates a pattern of Pakistani behavior in regional politics: the use of Jihadi militias for state political purposes. Shortly after attaining statehood, Pakistan sought to firm up their claims as a South Asian state for Muslims by acquiring the majority Muslim territory of Kashmir in 1947, whose accession to either Pakistan or India had not been decided at the time of British withdrawal. Intelligence assessments in Pakistan at the time concluded that the possibility of an uprising of the Muslim population against the ruling Hindu Maharaja was possible, even likely.⁹¹ In the first Kashmir War, the Pakistani army provided arms and other services to militias—many of which were inspired by the notion of liberating Kashmir in a jihad—enabling them to quickly push toward the Kashmiri capital, Srinagar, prompting an Indian military response.⁹² Later, after Pakistan’s regular army had finally committed its forces, the war ended with Kashmir split between both sides, affirming for Pakistan the use of religiously motivated militants to limit direct engagement with the larger, more capable Indian military as an effective policy.

In the second Kashmir war (1965), Pakistan’s plans for Islamic militias were more robust than the opportunistic plans of 1947. These militias received training and arms from the Pakistani side of Kashmir, and infiltrated across the border in small groups to attack Indian Kashmir. There had been unrest in the inter-war period, leading Pakistan to believe that Kashmiris would join in with the militants to overthrow Indian rule.⁹³ As

91. Shuja Nawaz, “The First Kashmir War Revisited,” *India Review* 7, no.2 (2008): 124.

92. S. Paul Kapur and Sumit Ganguly, “The Jihadi Paradox: Pakistan and Islamist Militancy in South Asia,” *International Security* 37, no.1 (2012): 118–119; Nawaz, “First Kashmir War,” 125–6; C. Christine Fair, “Insights from a Database of Lashkar-e-Taiba and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen Militants,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 37, no. 2 (2014): 262.

93. Gastav Ghose and Patrick James, “Third-Party Intervention in Ethno-Religious Conflict: Role Theory, Pakistan and War in Kashmir, 1965,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 17 (2005): 434.

in 1947, Pakistan's regular forces did not enter the conflict until after the irregular forces had struck. The eventual stalemate ended with a Soviet brokered return to status quo ante bellum, but further proved to Pakistan that militias, especially religiously motivated ones, could be used to prosecute their ambitions abroad without inflicting significant costs for their own military against the superior forces of India.⁹⁴ It was a trend the United States would be able to use to its advantage in Pakistan's troubled neighbor, Afghanistan.

3. The United States, Pakistan, and Afghanistan in the 1980s

If Pakistan makes most of its security decisions based primarily on India, its second consideration is Afghanistan. The disputed border between the two countries, known as the Durand Line, is a holdover from colonial India. In 1893, Sir Henry Mortimer Durand entered into an agreement with Afghan leader Abdur Rahman Khan to establish the boundary between the British colony and the independent state. In the process, Durand set an international border straddling the areas of the Pashtun and Baloch tribes, leading successive Afghan governments to question the legitimacy of the line. Afghanistan was the only country which did not vote in favor of Pakistani admission to the UN in 1947, because of the unsettled border. The countries would continue having border issues until a foreign invader provided the opportunity for Pakistani influence to extend into Afghanistan.

When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, Pakistan was still on the U.S. side of the Great Powers game, even though the relationship had diminished in the previous decade due in part to Pakistan's pursuit of a nuclear program.⁹⁵ The myopic U.S. political strategies of the Cold War presented an opportunity for Pakistan to once again fall into American good graces in the support of the Afghan mujahedeen's fight against the U.S.S.R. With the loss of Iran as an ally in the region due to revolution, Pakistan's leader Zia ul-Haq managed to get military aid from the United States that

94. Kapur and Ganguly, "Jihadi Paradox," 121.

95. Jaffrelot, *History of Pakistan*, 106.

topped \$250 million by 1985.⁹⁶ This aid was funneled through Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI) to groups that it supported in Afghanistan. The ISI and Zia preferred to aid groups with Islamist ideals instead of ethnic related groups, such as Pashtun nationalists.⁹⁷ Pakistan's strategy was intended not just to deal with the threat posed by a Soviet force on its doorstep, but to provide Zia with influence in the post war politics of Afghanistan in order to have an ally—not based on nationalism but on shared religious ideals—supporting their security posture against India.⁹⁸

4. Rise of the Taliban and Nuclear Troubles

As quickly as U.S. policies had shifted toward engagement in Afghanistan, the subsequent withdrawal of Soviet forces in 1989 saw an equally dramatic policy shift in the other direction. With no need to continue funneling weapons to Afghanistan, U.S. military aid to Pakistan quickly declined. Global politics required the United States to levy sanctions against the Pakistani nuclear program toward which America had turned a blind eye when it needed Pakistan's assistance.⁹⁹ The decline of U.S. involvement in the region created conditions in Afghanistan that the ISI quickly exploited by supporting the same religious organizations they had during the war, and interacting with local chieftains.¹⁰⁰ One of Pakistan's attempts to tie Afghanistan to Pakistan was by restoring and protecting the Kushka-Herat-Kandahar-Quetta highway.¹⁰¹ The ISI found it difficult to get the different tribes to work together, and looked for a single group to stabilize Afghanistan. They found it in the Taliban.

96. Rubin, "Realities Collide," 55.

97. Ibid., 56.

98. Jaffrelot, *History of Pakistan*, 107.

99. Ibid., 107; Shamshad Ahmad, "Pakistan's Quest for Security and Survival: U.S.-Pakistan Relations," in *Pakistan: the U.S., Geopolitics and Grand Strategies*, ed. Usama Butt and Julian Schofield (New York: Pluto Press, 2012), 111–112.

100. Rubin, "Realities Collide," 56; Rajeev Sharma, *Pak Proxy War: A Story of ISI, bin Laden, and Kargil* (New Delhi: Kaveri Books, 1999), 170.

101. Sharma, *Pak Proxy War*, 169.

Though Pakistan has officially denied supporting the Taliban, the group's rapid success in gaining control of Afghanistan made them the most useful group for the ISI to use to further their policy goals in the region.¹⁰² As one Pakistani diplomat said: "We will support whoever can bring stability to Afghanistan. If they are angels, nothing like it. And if they are devils, we don't mind."¹⁰³ The arrangement worked for Pakistan, since the Taliban was the only apparent group that could stabilize Pakistan's western border. When the Taliban gained control of Kabul, Pakistan was the first of only three countries to recognize the government—the other two being Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). These Pakistani policies concerning Afghanistan were again designed to build regional strength against their arch-rival India.

The threat that Pakistan continued to perceive from India received some justification in early May, 1998, when India conducted a series of five nuclear tests, shifting the balance of military power in South Asia in its favor.¹⁰⁴ Both India and Pakistan was being pushed by western countries to abandon these programs, arguably having the most significant effect on U.S. policy toward Pakistan prior to 9/11.¹⁰⁵ Pakistan felt it had no choice but to respond in kind, conducting their own tests by the end of the same month, arguably restoring a power balance to South Asia and further straining American relationships with both countries.¹⁰⁶

B. POST 9/11 PAK-U.S. RELATIONSHIP: BUSINESS AS USUAL

Pakistan, like many other countries realized quickly that America would respond swiftly against those who perpetrated and supported the attacks of 9/11. The call to Pakistan came the day after the attacks, first between U.S. Secretary of State Colin

102. Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 184; Peter Marsden, *The Taliban: War and Religion in Afghanistan* (New York: Zed Books Ltd., 2002), 126.

103. Kapur and Ganguly, "Jihad Paradox," 131.

104. Syed Farooq Hasnat, *Global Security Watch Pakistan* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011), 16.

105. A. Z. Hilali, *U.S.-Pakistan Relationship: Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005), 233.

106. Ahmad, "Pakistan's Quest for Security," 114.

Powell and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf. Later on that second day there was a meeting between Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and the director of the ISI, Lt-Gen. Mahmood Ahmed, who was in Washington, DC, at the time of the attacks. Both conversations indicated the direction of coming U.S. policy was targeted at the Taliban and al Qaeda in Afghanistan. As in Yemen, Pakistan had a choice that they were with the United States or against it, and were presented with a list of seven requirements that included basing and overflight rights, intelligence sharing, and cessation of support for the Taliban.¹⁰⁷

Musharraf noted in his memoir that even if he wanted to resist the U.S. ultimatum, Pakistan could not survive the consequences of such defiance. It was militarily weak compared to the United States, could not sustain its economy in the face of U.S. consequences, and socially “lack[ed] the homogeneity to galvanize the entire nation into an active confrontation [with the United States]”¹⁰⁸ Interestingly, Musharraf’s analysis keeps with the traditional Pakistani paradigm by framing the decision to support American policy as a strategic issue against India, which had already offered its bases to America. Musharraf saw increased Indo-U.S. relations as a threat to Pakistan’s stake in Kashmir as well as their nuclear weapons. Although losing the stability they had gained on their Afghan border by supporting the Taliban, when weighed against the possible benefits from U.S. support they would receive in a war on terror, Musharraf concluded that the Taliban was not worth committing suicide over.¹⁰⁹

Once again, the United States found itself in need of Pakistani help. Pakistan too found itself in a familiar position with much to lose if it did not cooperate and a fair amount to gain if it did. It agreed to many of the U.S. requirements and modified others (such as limiting basing to two airfields and restricting overflight to a narrow “highway” to Afghanistan) in order to limit domestic condemnation of the U.S. presence.¹¹⁰ Both the

107. Zahid Hussain, *Frontline Pakistan: The Struggle with Militant Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 35–36.

108. Pervez Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 202.

109. Musharraf, *Line of Fire*, 202–203.

110. Musharraf, *Line of Fire*, 206.

United States and Pakistan's political decisions continued the trend established since the beginning of the relationship.

1. The Significance of the FATA

With Pakistan's ostensible support, the stage was set for Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan. Once U.S. troops were on the ground, it opened the door to UAVs used for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) missions in the difficult to navigate mountains where al Qaeda was hiding. Almost immediately, the United States began armed UAV strikes in support of combat operations.

Seeing the rapid influx of U.S. forces into Afghanistan, many Taliban and al Qaeda members fled across the Pakistani border into the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). In this semi-autonomous region of Pakistan, al Qaeda and the Taliban were able to train and conduct attacks against U.S. forces across the border with little to stop them.¹¹¹ The United States asked Pakistan to deal with the militants in FATA, but as a backup plan, began flying *Predators* over the tribal areas from the airbase leased by the United States in Jacobabad, Baluchistan.¹¹² In 2002 and 2003, the UAVs did exclusively ISR missions over the FATA, focusing on North and South Waziristan in particular (see Figure 3).

111. Muhammad Amir Rana, Safdar Sial, Abdul Basit, *Dynamics of Taliban Insurgency in FATA* (Islamabad: Pak Institute for Peace Studies, 2010), 70.

112. Brian Glyn Williams, "The CIA's Covert Predator Drone War in Pakistan, 2004-2010: The History of an Assassination Campaign," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 33, no.10 (2010), 874.



Figure 3. Map of FATA and Pakistan-Afghanistan Border¹¹³

Pakistani attempts at military operations in South Waziristan to root out Taliban and al Qaeda met with mixed results, killing some militants but straining relationships with the local tribes. After the precedent set in Yemen in 2002, the United States finally decided to use armed UAVs inside Pakistan against an outspoken Taliban commander named Nek Muhammad. The strike occurred in South Waziristan, where Muhammad died in an explosion on June 18, 2004, that was claimed by Pakistani forces as a successful operation against the Taliban. Witnesses reported seeing a strange metal bird

113. "Map of FATA," The Long War Journal, accessed April 6, 2015, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/maps/pakistan-map-FATA-NWFP.php>.

flying around and that Muhammad was on his cell phone at the time of the attack, likely the tracking mechanism used by the CIA.¹¹⁴ After 2004, UAV strikes in Pakistan would increase exponentially, especially after President Obama took office. UAVs, as former Obama CIA director Leon Panetta put it, are “the only game in town in terms of trying to disrupt the al-Qaida leadership.”¹¹⁵

2. The Strikes Increase in FATA

As the years spent prosecuting the Long War in South Asia progressed, UAV strikes became more commonplace, but were still directed at taking out high-level al Qaeda operatives. As indicated in Table 3, only 10 strikes were reported in Pakistan before 2008. The strikes in 2008 more than tripled the previous years’ numbers. This was likely due to the increased autonomy given to the CIA for “Signature Strikes,” in which males of military age might be targeted based on suspicious patterns of activity, such as possession of weapons or placing improvised explosive devices (IEDs).¹¹⁶ This increased not only the number of strikes, but also the number of “militants” killed in the strikes, since according to the CIA and government metrics, any military-aged male would be counted as a militant unless explicit evidence posthumously proved innocence.¹¹⁷ Though this was not officially confirmed by either the Bush or Obama administrations, one government official joked that “when the C.I.A. sees ‘three guys doing jumping jacks,’ the agency thinks it is a terrorist training camp.”¹¹⁸ These practices likely still continue, though on a tighter leash due to repercussions from some high-profile cases that raised questions about accountability in the secret UAV programs.

114. Mark Mazzetti, “A Secret Deal on Drones, Sealed in Blood,” *The New York Times*, April 6, 20013, <http://www.nytimes.com>; Williams, “Covert Predator Drone War,” 874.

115. Leon Panetta, quoted by Nathan Gardells, “AFPAK Drone Strikes are Only Game in Town,” *New Perspectives Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (2009), accessed March 24, 2015, http://www.digitalnpq.org/archive/2009_summer/07_panetta.html.

116. Mazzetti, *Way of the Knife*, 290.

117. Ibid., 291; Kaag and Kreps, *Drone Warfare*, 32.

118. Jo Becker and Scott Shane, “Secret Kill List Proves a Test of Obama’s Principles and Will,” *The New York Times*, May 29, 2012, www.nytimes.com.

3. Collateral Damage and Domestic Reprisals

Signature strikes are likely to blame for many of the civilian casualties in Pakistan from UAV strikes. The three sources compiled in Table 3 provide estimates based on open source reporting from Pakistan, with data through the end of 2014. Data from the three sources averages out to 394 strikes, and 2766 people killed of which 251 were civilians. That is a nine percent collateral damage rate, though the U.S. government disputes the civilian numbers as lower, and the Pakistanis estimate the casualties as higher.¹¹⁹ Though the number of strikes declines after 2011 due to increased requirements placed on signature strikes, there is still substantial activity in a region where there is not a declared war.

119. Obama, “National Defense University.”

Table 3. Data from UAV Strikes in Pakistan¹²⁰

Year	Strikes	Total Killed	Civilians Killed
The New America Foundation			
2004-2007	10	178	101
2008	36	282	25
2009	54	536	25
2010	122	818	14
2011	72	483	6
2012	48	361	5
2013	27	165	5
2014	22	155	0
Total	391	2978	181
The Long War Journal			
2004	1		
2005	2	1	0
2006	3	142	20
2007	5	73	0
2008	35	317	31
2009	53	506	43
2010	117	815	14
2011	64	435	30
2012	46	304	4
2013	28	137	14
2014	24	152	0
Total	378	2882	156
The Bureau of Investigative Journalism			
Total	413	2438	416

Of these cases, a few stand out for their scale and for the domestic Pakistani reaction that followed them. The most illustrative of these is the case of a signature strike in North Waziristan on March 17, 2011. In the village of Datta Khel, a meeting of tribal elders, known as a *Jirga*, was convened. About 40 men sat around rugs laid out in the

120. Table derived from Micha Zenko “Reforming U.S. Drone Strike Policies,” *Council on Foreign Relations* Special Report no. 63 (2013): 13; Data from New America Foundation, “Drone Wars Pakistan,” accessed January 9, 2015, <http://www.newamerica.net>; Bill Roggio, “Charting the Data for U.S. Airstrikes in Pakistan, 2004–2015,” accessed January 9, 2015, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/pakistan-strikes>; The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, “Get the Data: Drone Wars,” accessed January 9, 2015, <http://www.thebureauinvestigates.com>.

open to engage in the traditional political mechanism of the tribal regions to discuss issues of chromite mining in the region.¹²¹ The Pakistani military knew about the meeting, which was to take place in a public space near a bus depot. Twenty minutes into the meeting, four missiles impacted the site, killing 45 people.¹²² Sources within the U.S. government indicated that this was a meeting of senior militants, making the attack justifiable.¹²³ However, the repercussions in Pakistan were significant, drawing condemnation from Pakistan's Army Chief, General Kayani, and inciting protests outside the U.S. consulates in the cities of Lahore, Karachi, and Peshawar.¹²⁴

This particular incident also reportedly caused problems within the Obama administration. The ambassador to Pakistan, Cameron Munter (with secretary of state Hillary Clinton's support) argued for veto power over strikes, which were damaging the U.S.-Pakistan relationship. The CIA—then led by director Leon Panetta—argued against this policy and was allowed to continue the program with minimal interference from the ambassador.¹²⁵ It was a moment reminiscent of another CIA misadventure, when the agency ignored advice from state department personnel in Tehran, and implemented a coup against Iranian Prime Minister, Muhammad Mussadiq, reinstating the Shah, and paving the way for Iranian ill-will toward the United States¹²⁶

4. Goodwill Killings?

In addition to the problems presented by signature strikes, some of the targeted strikes began to raise more questions about secret policies governing U.S. UAV operations. Around the time that President Obama took office, Musharraf stepped down

121. Robert Greenwald, "Unmanned: America's Drone Wars," October 30, 2013, <https://vimeo.com/86611130>.

122. New America Foundation, "Drone Wars: Pakistan."

123. Mazzetti, *Way of the Knife*, 291.

124. Ibid.

125. Ibid., 292.

126. Mark Gasiorowski, "US Foreign Policy Toward Iran During the Mussadiq Era," in *The Middle East and the United States* 5th ed., edited by David W. Lesch and Mark L. Haas (Boulder: Westview Press, 2012), 64–65.

from the office of President of Pakistan, allowing an elected civilian government to take over. While this signaled a significant leap in Pakistani politics, many of the domestic terrorism problems remained, particularly the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP, also known as the Pakistani Taliban). The TTP leader, Baitullah Mehsud, operated from the shelter of the FATA. The TTP primarily carried out attacks against Pakistani institutions and civilians, initially leading to the determination that Mehsud could not be a target of a UAV strike since he was not “an imminent threat to the United States.”¹²⁷

This opinion evolved over time, since the TTP had sheltered elements of al Qaeda and TTP attacks in Pakistan could endanger U.S. citizens in the country.¹²⁸ This imminent threat to Pakistani security seemed to provide a bridge of goodwill between the countries that would allow UAV strikes to continue. A UAV found Mehsud in August 2009 on the roof of his in-law’s home in South Waziristan, with his wife and other members of his family.¹²⁹ The missile struck the roof, killing Mehsud and three family members, a result satisfactory to both Pakistan and the United States.¹³⁰ Thus the strikes continued beyond 2009, with Pakistan’s approval.

5. Neptune’s Spear

UAV operations in Pakistan are not happening in a vacuum of other U.S. activity, as indicated by the state department concerns over UAVs, and combat operations in neighboring Afghanistan. The repercussions of UAV strikes in Pakistan can be compared to the effects from the 2011 raid that killed al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, which also occurred in Pakistan’s territory. Pakistan’s tacit support for UAVs allowed for the ISR missions which helped locate and confirm the location of bin Laden in a compound in Abbottabad, a town about 30 miles north of the Pakistani capital, Islamabad.

127. Becker and Shane, “Secret Kill List.”

128. Mazzetti, *Way of the Knife*, 227.

129. Becker and Shane, “Secret Kill List.”

130. Mazzetti, *Way of the Knife*, 228; New America Foundation, “Drone Wars: Pakistan.”

The use of UAVs was certainly bothersome to many in Pakistan, but it allowed for some insulating distance between U.S. forces and Pakistan itself. Manned U.S. aircraft conducting attacks in Pakistan would have never been allowed, nor would any U.S. troop presence in the country. When a CIA contractor, Raymond Davis, killed two armed Pakistanis in early 2011, the incident severely strained diplomatic relations and drew public condemnation of the United States.¹³¹ A special forces raid would likely have similar effects. These differences between manned and unmanned operations were illustrated by the aftereffects of the raid that killed Osama bin Laden in Pakistan.

On May 1, 2011, Navy SEALs flew from Afghanistan to raid bin Laden's compound, while the eyes of a stealthy CIA *Sentinel* UAV beamed images of the operation back to the Whitehouse. The SEALs killed bin Laden among others defending the compound, gathered as much intelligence as they could, and were back in Afghanistan with bin Laden's body less than four hours after they had taken off. Pakistan was not informed of the raid until after it had happened, when President Obama called Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari, and Admiral Mullen (then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) contacted General Kayani.¹³² Though both Pakistanis congratulated their U.S. counterparts on the mission, Kayani in particular expressed concern over the violation of Pakistani sovereignty and the backlash that would come in the absence of a statement about the mysterious raid.¹³³ The announcement that night by President Obama may have explained the extraordinary reason for the intrusion into Pakistan, but it did not explain why not a single Pakistani had been notified in advance. That explanation came two days later from Leon Panetta, who expressed doubts about whether the Pakistanis would have kept the secret.¹³⁴ Pakistan now realized that, with bin Laden dead in its back

131. Adam Goldman and Kimberly Dozier, "Arrested U.S. Official Raymond Allen Davis is actually CIA Contractor," *Christian Science Monitor*, February 21, 2011, www.csmonitor.com.

132. Mark Bowden, *The Finish: The Killing of Osama Bin Laden* (New York: Grove Press, 2012), 236.

133. Peter L. Bergen, *Manhunt: The Ten-year Search for Bin Laden from 9/11 to Abbottabad* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2012), 236–237.

134. Massimo Calabresi, "CIA Chief: Pakistan Would Have Jeopardized bin Laden Operation," *Time*, May 3, 2011, www.time.com.

yard at the hands of U.S. operatives, strategic cooperation in the Long War had been one-sided, and that neither side could completely trust the other.¹³⁵ The U.S.-Pakistani relations rollercoaster was again headed downward; much work would be required to rebuild trust between the two countries. Despite the raid and downturn in relations, UAV strikes continue in Pakistan, either confirming American disregard for Pakistani sovereignty or affirming Pakistan's reliance on U.S. support in any measure (even if condemning it publicly).

6. U.S. Aid to Pakistan

As with Yemen, one useful metric for evaluating the state of U.S. relations with Pakistan is aid money provided to the country. Over the course of the war in Afghanistan, Pakistan received a significant sum of aid money from the United States, as well as reimbursements for support provided to coalition forces for the war. The figures presented in Table 4 show that there was a steady rise in aid until after FY2011, when the numbers began to decrease.

Table 4. U.S. Aid to Pakistan¹³⁶

Fiscal Year	FY2002–08 (AVG)	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014*	FY2015*
Security Aid	315.4	989	1236	1277	849	361	353	336
Economic Aid	462.1	1366	1769	1186	1067	834	610	546
Coalition Support	956.7	685	1499	118	688	1438	144	

While it is unclear how much effect U.S. domestic budget concerns had on this trend, it is possible that the decline is due to U.S. preparation to reduce its involvement in the region as it has in the past. The United States also conducted the Osama bin Laden

135. Bergen, *Manhunt*, 245–246.

136. Congressional Research Service, “Direct Overt U.S. Aid Appropriations for and Military Reimbursements to Pakistan, FY2002-FY2015,” March 26, 2014. *FY2014 numbers are estimates and FY2015 numbers are requested budget allotments.

raid and lost tacit public approval for UAV strikes from the government during the same timeframe.¹³⁷ If the downward trend continues, Pakistan will likely turn to other countries like China for support, pursuing its ever-present goal of security against India.

C. SUMMARY

Pakistan occupies a position of great strategic importance in Asia. It knows it. It understands that it can be valuable to other states as a strategic ally, and it can compete with other regional powers through nuclear, conventional, and unconventional means. This makes Pakistan very capable, and potentially dangerous. At the same time, it is predictable—India and Afghanistan are Pakistan’s biggest concerns and, at the end of the day, all Pakistan wants is security. A secure, stable Pakistan is in the U.S. strategic interest, given the number of times American strategy has relied on Pakistan’s support. Yet, in the current paradigm, the United States again seems to be diminishing ties with Islamabad, now that the war in Afghanistan is over. There are residuals from this conflict that still occupy the FATA, concerning both the Pakistanis and the U.S. UAV operations in this region will likely continue as the least objectionable means to prosecute this Long War. As in Yemen, the autonomous region of the FATA, further from the control of the government, is where the terrorist threat is breeding and where it is being engaged by UAVs. This mutual security concern is the best means for future U.S.-Pakistan cooperation, so long as it is conducted in the frame of a long-term partnership and not in the short-term framework of previous iterations of this relationship.

137. Declan Walsh, “Pakistani Parliament Demands End to U.S. Drone Strikes,” *The New York Times*, March 20, 2012, www.nytimes.com.

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V. CASE COMPARISON AND ANALYSIS

A. COMPARING THE CASES: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

As stated at the beginning of this thesis, the reason for studying and comparing the countries of Yemen and Pakistan is that they are the centers of U.S. UAV operations. That is not the only similarity between these two countries, and while their differences seem to have little effect on U.S. policies, the differences do seem to contribute to the capacity for stability within each country.

1. Governance

Looking at the governments of Pakistan and Yemen at the height of UAV operations, we find two similar but distinct government systems. Yemen had an authoritarian system for over 30 years run by a single strong man (Saleh). Though he was well versed in dealing with the tribes and differing factions in the country, revolutions in ideas (the Arab Spring) coupled with revolutions in technology (social media and internet) allowed AQAP to grow in areas where his government—and subsequent governments of Yemen—have little control. Pakistan too had a government that was considered authoritarian, but it was centered on the cult of institution of the Army led by Pervez Musharraf. Pakistan's military is still an important part of the politics of Pakistan, however as the country developed a more vigorous public life, animated in part by democratically-oriented reform, condemnation for UAVs and U.S. involvement increased. Pakistan, like Yemen, purports to rule over territory it does not fully control.

The same new information technologies that have facilitated public communication by insurgents and terrorists have imposed new standards are public accountability even on authoritarian regimes. As a consequence, both Pakistan and Yemen have found it increasingly difficult to justify their toleration of external powers exercising force on their own populations. Both the Pakistani and Yemeni parliaments passed resolutions in 2012 and 2013, respectively, demanding the cessation of UAV

operations within their borders.¹³⁸ These resolutions were non-binding and had no effect on Pakistani and Yemeni cooperation. Whether the opposition of authentically democratic governmental bodies could be brushed aside so easily in another matter, however. The ability to use UAVs in countries with which the United States is not at war seems to rely on an authoritarian government that complies with U.S. directives, or the absence of any effective government at all (as in Somalia).

2. Regional Issues

In regional politics, Pakistan sees itself as a major player trying to balance itself against India, and dealt with its internal security issues by granting a fair amount of autonomy to the FATA and empowering the ISI to channel extremist groups against its neighbors as a way of supporting its external security posture. Pakistan only became focused against the Taliban and al Qaeda after that became a requirement of the United States, and only because it stood to benefit from cooperation with America. These groups do not seem to constitute a big regional issue for Pakistan.

Compared with Pakistan, Yemen is too small to realistically challenge for increased political clout in its region (the Arabian Peninsula), and tends to be more concerned with matters of internal security, which take a significant part of its military capacity. The regional issues pushed by Saudi Arabia are only one factor driving Yemeni policies, and Yemen's fight against AQAP is a product of the U.S.-Saudi relationship. This requirement drew Yemeni security forces away from the north where the Houthis continued to grow, further complicating Saudi regional concerns and eventually precipitating the current conflict in Yemen. Interestingly, the two largest actors within Yemen now seem to be the Houthis and AQAP—both vehemently opposed to each other. AQAP is now one of the few groups in Yemen with the capacity to take on the Houthis,

138. Hakim Almasmari, "Drone Strikes Must End, Yemen's Parliament Says," *CNN*, December 15, 2013, www.cnn.com; Declan Walsh, "Pakistani Parliament Demands End to U.S. Drone Strikes," *The New York Times*, March 20, 2012, www.nytimes.com.

leading some pro-government fighters to also support AQAP, further upsetting Yemen's internal politics.¹³⁹

Pakistan's drive for regional influence and parity with India has fostered the development of a strong security apparatus that has, thus far, been able to maintain order in most of the country. Yemen's relatively weak regional position makes it more susceptible to the requirements of stronger neighbors and international powers, requiring it to focus on outside policies before taking care of itself.

3. Aid and Economies

Pakistan and Yemen have both benefited from U.S. aid contributions. Both countries were also able to purchase some U.S. military hardware as a result of their cooperation. Aid money received from the United States does not drive Pakistan's economy—which is diversified and has a GDP of \$232.29 billion—but does still affect its political decisions.¹⁴⁰ If Pakistan stopped receiving aid from America, history shows that Pakistan would find another “friend” (China most obviously) to help support its ability to maintain its current security posture against India. In Yemen, any amount of aid money is significant to the country's economy, which only has a GDP of \$35.95 billion and suffered from an unemployment rate of near 30% in 2013 (which has likely increased since then due to civil war).¹⁴¹ These factors greatly contributing to Yemen's willingness to seek this aid from any source. Yemen's economy is failing, due to oil, qat, and water. Yemen's oil reserves are the country's primary source of funds, and their production has slowed since 2001, due to dwindling reserves and attacks on oil infrastructure.¹⁴² The qat and water problems are intertwined, and contribute to increasing hunger in Yemen. Qat is

139. Safa al Ahmad, “The Fight for Yemen,” Frontline, PBS, April 7, 2015, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/frontline-fight-for-yemen/>.

140. “Pakistan GDP, Current U.S. Dollars,” accessed April 10 2015, http://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Pakistan/GDP_current_USD/.

141. “Yemen GDP, Current U.S. Dollars,” accessed April 10 2015, http://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Yemen/GDP_current_USD/; “Yemen Unemployment Rate,” accessed April 10, 2015, <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/yemen/unemployment-rate>.

142. U.S. Energy Information Administration, “Yemen,” accessed April 11, 2015, <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=YM>.

an evergreen plant that contains a stimulant similar to amphetamine, which is chewed by at least half the Yemeni population. Cultivation of qat takes up 40% of Yemen's irrigated farming land.¹⁴³ Yemen used to be the most agriculturally successful Arab country; now its economy is driven by internal qat demand, which leads to increased reliance on food imports, causing further strain on the economy. Pakistan is a more stable country than Yemen in part because of its economy, which contributes to Pakistan's ability to maintain and exercise its security apparatus. This is the biggest difference between these two cases. Yemen will find it difficult to grow its security without some stabilization of its economy.

4. Tribal Areas

UAVs are not being used to target people in Islamabad or Sana'a. They operate in the remote tribal areas of both Pakistan and Yemen—harsh, mountainous areas where the central government has limited control. These areas seem more stable under conditions of autonomy due to tribal culture and the population's identity structure. As one Pakistani tribal leader said while talking about his identity in the early 1970s, "I have been a Pashtun for 6,000 years; a Muslim for 1,300 years; and a Pakistani for 25."¹⁴⁴ In these tribal areas, history, custom and honor are not just words but have entrenched meaning. A faceless UAV that kills one civilian for every nine militants is unsatisfactory to tribal honor. Maintaining positive relationships after a strike often requires the payment of "blood money" or provision of weapons to these tribal communities.¹⁴⁵ These tribes are important to implementing stability in these countries, especially in areas where al Qaeda is winning popular support. This is not to say that future UAV use will be confined to tribal areas, but that the picture from 5000 feet does not provide sufficient information to

143. Tom Finn, "Yemen's Saleh Gone, Attention Turns to Problem of Qat," *Reuters*, April 25, 2012, www.reuters.com.

144. Wali Khan, quoted by Akbar Ahmed, "Muslim Tribes and the War on Terror," transcript from speech at Chatham House, London, June 25, 2013.

145. Scott Shane, "Drone Strikes in Yemen Said to Set a Dangerous Precedent," *The New York Times*, April 13, 2015, www.nytimes.com.

evaluate repercussions of strikes on these regions, and U.S. understanding of the culture where it carries out assaults is paramount to knowing when and when not to use UAVs.

B. EVALUATING U.S. POLICIES

With a better understanding of the cases, U.S. policies can now be evaluated for intent, cost, effectiveness, and improvement in Yemen and Pakistan.

1. Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency

The fight against al Qaeda is often viewed in America under the banner of Counterterrorism (CT). In this respect, U.S. policy accepts that the acts committed by al Qaeda are terrorist based on the idea that the acts are a means to demonstrate power through violence against a population. In the case of 9/11, the demonstration of force was directed at removing U.S. influence from the Middle East and South Asia. This contributes to their larger goal of expanding political influence in that region with eventual designs for true political control (as the Taliban had).¹⁴⁶ This is where CT and Counterinsurgency (COIN) ideas merge. Terrorism is a tool often used by insurgencies, who must convince a population that they deserve control of or will take control of the political sphere. In Yemen and Pakistan, al Qaeda is an insurgency which is attempting to gain support of local populations in order to continue their greater struggle. Their efforts thus far have gained them a not insignificant amount of political capital, which they use to influence sections of the population in their favor.

Counterterrorism then is defending the population from terrorist acts, which falls more closely in line with law enforcement tasks of providing for a population's internal security. In the U.S. after 9/11, counterterrorism is evident in the levels of increased security at ports, airports, border crossings, as well as other increased security measures. In the countries of Yemen and Pakistan, the ability of the state to provide security against terrorist acts, especially in or originating from more autonomous regions is limited. Because there are groups in these countries who have committed or incited terror attacks

146. Fazul Abdallah, "What is Al-Qaeda?" *Inspire*, Spring 2013, 35.

in America—such as 9/11, the Fort Hood shooting and Boston Marathon bombings—U.S. engagement against these groups to prevent future attacks is viewed by America as CT for the U.S. population.

In Yemen and Pakistan, al Qaeda and associated groups are conducting terror attacks against the local populations necessitating local CT and increased security. But these groups are not terrorizing the populations for no reason, as indicated in the Al Qaeda magazine, *Inspire*:

Al-Qaeda's main goal in this stage—at least—is to aid every oppressed Muslim in this world regardless of his madhhab and race. As for its long-term goal, is to reestablish the Islamic Caliphate through Jihad in the cause of Allah and to implement the Shari'a of Allah in the whole land of Allah.¹⁴⁷

Counterterrorism alone is insufficient to defeat or even control al Qaeda. A robust COIN capability that comes from within the contested country is necessary to eliminate the underlying conditions that allow for insurgencies and terrorism to flourish.

This is the reason the United States has courted Yemeni and Pakistani military help and provided security aid to both countries: so that they can conduct the operations required to eliminate al Qaeda. But when these efforts are compared to other U.S. tactics, it becomes clear which path America prefers to take. UAVs are cheap, low risk, and as Admiral Dennis Blair said in 2011, “a global game of Whac-A-Mole—something to keep you busy,”¹⁴⁸ and show the American public some progress in the Long War. The U.S. goal is to defeat al Qaeda. For Yemen and Pakistan, defeating al Qaeda is a proximate goal—it is a way of helping establishing control over a population and political space, which is the ultimate goal. U.S. UAV strikes risk alienating the very people whose cooperation is needed to stabilize and control these countries.

147. Abdallah, “What is Al-Qaeda?” 35.

148. Madea Benjamin, *Drone Warfare: Killing by Remote Control* (New York: Verso, 2013),

2. Degrading Al Qaeda

The objective of UAV strikes is supposed to be targeting high-level al Qaeda members for the purpose of disrupting operations, which eventually will contribute to the organization's defeat.¹⁴⁹ The development of the signature strike doctrine indicated that U.S. strategy had shifted to a war of attrition as a way of degrading al Qaeda. The CIA still looks at the strikes in terms of numbers, as indicated by Director John Brennan: "Might some of these actions be stimulants to others joining their ranks? Sure, that's a possibility. I think, though it has taken off of the battlefield a lot more terrorists, than it has put on."¹⁵⁰ Yet despite the reported numbers of militants killed, al Qaeda seems to be as strong as ever, especially in Yemen where it is a major player in the current conflict. U.S. strategy has focused too much on al Qaeda's chain of command and too little on al Qaeda's base of support. "The mere killing of insurgents, without the simultaneous destruction of their infrastructure, is a waste of effort because all casualties will be made good by new recruits."¹⁵¹ In short, U.S. UAV policies in Yemen and Pakistan may have helped prevent large-scale attacks on the United States, but have also sown the seeds of discontent in these remote regions such that a self-perpetuating cycle of strike and regeneration will continue in the absence of a policy shift.

It is relatively difficult to estimate numbers of al Qaeda and other affiliated groups, but the expansion of Taliban and AQAP influence is undeniable in Pakistan and Yemen. Two other metrics can help illuminate the effectiveness of these groups and whether they are gaining or losing capacity: propaganda output and rate of attacks. One analysis of al Qaeda central (Pakistan) output of propaganda found that:

plots of the time series for [UAV] strikes and Al Qaeda media output show no clear relationships. Regression analysis finds that [UAV] strikes

149. Smith and Walsh, "Drone Strikes," 315.

150. John Brennan, quoted in Micah Zenko, "CIA Director: We're Winning the War on Terror, but It Will Never End," *Council on Foreign Relations*, April 8, 2015, <http://blogs.cfr.org/zenko/2015/04/08/cia-director-were-winning-the-war-on-terror-but-it-will-never-end/>.

151. Sir Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1966), 116, quoted in Nathan Lienes and Charles Wolf Jr., *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts* (Chicago: Markham Publishing Company, 1970), 77.

may be associated with more, not less, propaganda output. The relationship is not sufficiently clear-cut that we are willing to conclude that there has been a positive relationship between drone strikes and propaganda. However, in none of the regression models was the relationship clearly or strongly negative. This suggests that, at best, [UAV] strikes have little or no effect on Al Qaeda's ability to create and issue propaganda. Al Qaeda's propaganda output appears to be quite resilient in the face of [UAV] strikes.¹⁵²

As for the metric of attacks, it seems that both Yemen and Pakistan have suffered violent acts due to their cooperation with the United States. In Pakistan, the Taliban killed over 140 Pakistanis (mostly children) in a school in December 2014, among others.¹⁵³ In Yemen, AQAP carried out multiple attacks on government and army buildings during the ramp up of UAV strikes from 2009 to 2011.¹⁵⁴ These cases are not meant to indicate a trend one way or the other, only to show that attacks do continue in both countries.

Compare the U.S. campaign in Yemen and Pakistan with the Israeli targeted assassination campaign during the al-Aqsa uprising from 2000 to 2004. Though the Israelis used conventional (not unmanned) weapons to conduct this campaign, elimination of high-value leadership targets is the same basic principle of the U.S. UAV campaign against al Qaeda.¹⁵⁵ In a multivariate analysis of the Israeli case, Mohammed Hafez and Joseph Hatfield found that despite hypothetical expectations of deterrence, backlash (increased attacks), disruption, and diminishing capacity, the analysis did not support any of these outcomes.¹⁵⁶ Their conclusion suggests that a decreased Palestinian violence rate resulted from increased Israeli security measures, creating a "*diminishing opportunity effect*, whereby terrorists find it difficult to penetrate targets that were

152. Smith and Walsh, "Drone Strikes," 325.

153. Sophia Saifi and Greg Botelho, "In Pakistan school attack, Taliban terrorists kill 145, mostly children," CNN, December 17, 2014, www.cnn.com.

154. Eleanor T. West, "Yemen: Hearts, Minds & Al-Qaida," *World Policy Journal* 28, no. 2 (Summer, 2011):123.

155. Smith and Walsh, "Drone Strikes," 311.

156. Mohammed M. Hafez and Joseph M. Hatfield, "Do Targeted Assassinations Work? A Multivariate Analysis of Israel's Controversial Tactic during Al-Aqsa Uprising," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29 (2006):378.

previously vulnerable to attack because of purely defensive measures.”¹⁵⁷ There certainly is a diminishing opportunity effect for attacks in the United States. This effect is less in Pakistan but still present due to their military institutions, and seemingly non-existent in Yemen, which, as of this writing (spring 2015) has fallen into civil war.

C. OBSERVATIONS ABOUT UAVS

Why do UAVs invoke such strong emotions about the nature and conduct of war? As sticks and rocks gave way to spears, bows, and arrows, so too did smooth bore muzzle loaders give way to repeating rifled guns. Every evolution in weaponry seems to add distance between shooter and target, and at every step there were cries of dishonor and unfairness. Yet in all of these steps, combatants were always in the same geographic region and usually in range of one another. When America found itself in a war, soldiers and sailors had to be deployed to the area of conflict to carry out American policy.

In the case of UAVs, a country can now exercise power without immediate, reciprocal risk to the forces involved. The very same miniaturization of technology that allows U.S. airmen to operate a complex ISR aircraft from thousands of miles away, is the same technology that allows a terrorist to put out more complex and professional propaganda using his iPhone and social media sites to spread their message and increase recruiting capability.¹⁵⁸ In Yemen and Pakistan, technology is working for both sides, and the result is not rapid, clean warfare, but instability and a lengthy struggle.

UAV technology is not a coming thing of the future, as the United States, Britain, Israel, China, and Iran all have operational armed UAVs.¹⁵⁹ Other countries like Russia, South Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have all begun pursuing armed UAVs.¹⁶⁰ Recently, Pakistan demonstrated an indigenously produced armed UAV for

157. Hafez and Hatfield, 379.

158. Smith and Walsh, “Drone Strikes,” 315.

159. Micha Zenko and Sarah Kreps, “Limiting Armed Drone Proliferation,” Council on Foreign Relations, Special Report no. 69 (2014), 6.

160. Ibid., 3.

use in the FATA against Taliban and other insurgents.¹⁶¹ In the traditional arms race between the two countries, India is also seeking to arm drones, in what may lead to future unmanned wars for Kashmir.¹⁶² With technology evolving at ever faster rates, the world community must come up with new rules regarding UAVs or the only precedent for customary law will be the actions of the United States against al Qaeda.

161. Tim Craig, "Pakistan says it will deploy its own armed drone against terrorists," The Washington Post, March 13, 2015, www.washingtonpost.com.

162. Ibid.

VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the available unclassified information, recent events have shown that UAVs are an amazingly capable tactical tool. The United States has used them primarily to gather intelligence against adversarial groups and to successfully eliminate several high-level al Qaeda members, which does on some level degrade their capability to operate against America. UAVs are used only in countries with authoritarian governments (or lack of an effective government as in Somalia) that are capable of unilaterally allowing U.S. assets to operate within their borders.

U.S. strategy seems to be primarily reliant on these amazing tools to root out threats to America. In this way, it has failed to address the true problems on the ground, which allows these groups to survive and, in some cases, flourish. UAVs are used against groups in areas where government control is weak. In the case of Yemen and Pakistan, these are tribal areas where the U.S. can do little to appease the local leaders if it is not interacting with them directly or supporting the central government in ways to improve relations with these outlying areas. In many cases, the demands of U.S. policy have placed these governments at odds with elements of their populations, promoting anti-Americanism. In the case of Yemen, pushing its forces to focus on AQAP stretched its capabilities thin, helping pave the way for the Houthis to take control of a significant portion of the country. Pakistan's greater military capacity is a likely reason why it has been able to maintain more stability than Yemen despite repercussions of U.S. involvement in FATA. Relationships with both Pakistan and Yemen have been damaged by the continuation of UAV strikes.

In Yemen and Pakistan, U.S. policies have not been strategically effective against al Qaeda, but they have minimized the danger to U.S. service members at a low cost to America. Other countries will see this pattern of armed UAV use and seek to develop their own capabilities. Armed UAV proliferation will become a significant issue for future U.S. foreign policy. If other countries use unmanned platforms against "terrorist" groups wherever they hide, the United States will have little to stand on if it disagrees with these actions.

The future of limited conflict will depend on future UAV policy decisions by the United States. The window for a secret UAV program has passed; the whole world knows of these tools and their capabilities. War is a terrible thing and should be a last resort when diplomacy fails and not a quick choice when diplomacy gets difficult. War is a political tool, but UAVs allow a shortcut around other more expensive political tools that are more effective, such as aid, support and trust.

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